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Benedict XVI, Pope, "January 2012" (2012). *Marian Thoughts of Pope Benedict XVI*. Paper 82.
http://ecommons.udayton.edu/imri_popes_benedict_xvi/82

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January 2012



Jan. 1 - Pope's Homily on Feast of Mary, Mother of God: "In Order to be Blessed, We Have to Stand in God's Presence" – Excerpts of the Vatican translation of the homily (Jan. 1, 2012, Zenit.org).

On the first day of the year, the liturgy resounds in the Church throughout the world with the ancient priestly blessing that we heard during today's first reading: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace" (Num 6:24-26).
... The first to be swept up by this blessing was Mary the virgin, the spouse of Joseph, chosen by God from the first moment of her existence to be the mother of his incarnate Son. She is the "blessed among women"

(Lk 1:42) – in the words of Saint Elizabeth's

greeting. Her whole life was spent in the light of the Lord, within the radius of His name and of the face of God incarnate in Jesus, the "blessed fruit of her womb". This is how Luke's Gospel presents her to us: fully intent upon guarding and meditating in her heart upon everything concerning her son Jesus (cf. Lk 2:19, 51). The mystery of her divine motherhood that we celebrate today contains in superabundant measure the gift of grace that all human motherhood bears within it, so much so that the fruitfulness of the womb has always been associated with God's blessing. The Mother of God is the first of the blessed, and it is she who bears the blessing; she is the woman who received Jesus into herself and brought him forth for the whole human family. In the words of the liturgy: "without losing the glory of virginity, [she] brought forth into the world the eternal light, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Preface I of the Blessed Virgin Mary). Mary is the mother and model of the Church, who receives the divine Word in faith and offers herself to God as the "good soil" in which he can continue to accomplish his mystery of salvation. The Church also participates in the mystery of divine motherhood, through preaching, which sows the seed of the Gospel throughout the world, and through the sacraments, which communicate grace and divine life to men. The Church exercises her motherhood especially in the sacrament of Baptism, when she generates God's children from water and the Holy Spirit, who cries out in each of them: "Abba, Father!" (Gal 4:6). Like Mary, the Church is the mediator of God's blessing for the world: she receives it in receiving Jesus and she transmits it in bearing Jesus. ... Dear friends, peace, in the fullest and highest sense, is the sum and synthesis of all blessings. ... The Church too, on the first day of the year, invokes this supreme good in a special way; she does so, like the Virgin Mary, by revealing Jesus to all, for as Saint Paul says, "He is our peace" (Eph 2:14), and at the same time the "way" by which individuals and peoples can reach this goal to

which we all aspire. ...

... Jesus is a way that can be travelled, open to everyone. He is the path of peace. Today the Virgin Mary points Him out to us, she shows us the Way: let us walk in it! And you, Holy Mother of God, accompany us with your protection. Amen.

Jan. 1 - On Peace: "We Begin the New Year 2012 by Fixing Our Gaze on the Face of God" – Extracts of the Vatican translation of the Angelus address (Jan. 6, 2012, Zenit.org).

...[Jesus] is the visible image of the invisible God. And this is also thanks to the Virgin Mary, whose greatest title we celebrate today; the title with which she plays a unique role in the history of salvation, as Mother of God. In her womb the Son of the Most High took our flesh and we can contemplate His glory (cf. Jn 1:14), and feel His presence as God-with-us.

Thus we begin the New Year 2012 by fixing our gaze on the Face of God, who is revealed in the Child of Bethlehem, and on his Mother Mary who accepted the divine plan with humble abandonment. Thanks to her generous "yes", the true light that enlightens every man appeared in the world (cf. Jn 1:9) and the way of peace was reopened to us. ...

...Let us entrust these wishes to the intercession of the Mother of the "King of Peace", so that the year which is beginning may be a time of hope and of peaceful coexistence for the whole world.

...

[In English:] ... May the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we honour today as Mother of God, always guide and protect us, helping us to grow in love for her Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. ...

Jan. 4 - Papal Message for the World Day of the Sick —Conclusion—(Jan 4, 2012, VIS)

[May] Mary, Mother of Mercy and Health of the Sick

...accompany and sustain the faith and the hope of every sick and suffering person on the journey of healing for the wounds of body and spirit!.

Jan. 4 - On Christmas and Epiphany: "Christmas Is Joy Because We See -- and at Last We Are Sure -- That God Is Man's Good" – Translated extract at the conclusion of the General Audience (Jan. 6, 2012, Zenit.org).

And may you, dear newlyweds, make every effort to imitate the Holy Family of Nazareth, by living out an authentic communion of love and of life.

Jan. 6 - On the Light of the Gospel: "The Church, Thanks to the Word of God, Sees Through the Fog"- Translated conclusion of the Angelus address, and Announcement of the Consistory for the Creation of New Cardinals (Jan. 6, 2012, Zenit.org).

... Let us entrust their [two new apostolic nuncios'] service and work of evangelization to the Virgin Mary.

... I would like to invite everyone to pray for these men who have been newly nominated to the College of Cardinals, imploring the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, that they might know how to bear witness with courage and dedication to their love for Christ and for his Church. ...

Jan. 8 - Pope's Homily for Feast of Jesus' Baptism: "Prayer Is the First Condition for Educating" – Translated conclusion (Jan. 9, 2012, Zenit.org)

... We entrust them [these children] to the maternal guidance of Mary Most Holy, that they might grow in age, wisdom and grace and become true Christians, faithful and joyful witnesses of God's love.

Jan 8 - On Being Children: "Each One of Us Is Willed, Is Loved by God" – Translated extract of the Angelus address (Jan. 9, 2012, Zenit.org)

... We ask the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and of all those who believe in him, to help us live truly as children of God, not by words, or not by words alone, but by deeds....

Jan. 13 - Pope Clarifies True Nature of Justice and Peace: Remembers Christians Paying for Fidelity With Their Lives – Translated conclusion of annual greetings to the members of the General Inspectorate for Public Security in the Vatican (Jan. 13, 2012, Zenit.org)

Let us pray to the Mother of God, Queen of Peace, to support our intentions and activities with her maternal intercession. To her we entrust this year of 2012, that everyone may live in mutual respect and strive after the common good, in the hope that no act of violence will be committed in the name of God, supreme guarantor of justice and peace.

Jan. 15 - On the Role of Spiritual Guides: Helping Those Called to "Recognize the Voice of God and Follow It" – Extract of Angelus address (Jan. 16, 2012, Zenit.org)

Dear friends, let us pray to the Virgin Mary for all teachers, especially priests and parents, that they have complete awareness of the importance of their spiritual role to help young people not only in human growth but also in answering God's call and saying: "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

Jan. 19 - Benedict XVI's Address to US Bishops on 'Ad Limina' Visit: "The Legitimate Separation of Church and State Cannot Be Taken to Mean That the Church

Must Be Silent" – The conclusion (Jan. 19, 2012, Zenit.org).

... With great affection I commend all of you, and the flock entrusted to your care, to the prayers of Mary, Mother of Hope, and cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of grace and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jan. 20 - Pope's Address to Neocatechumenal Way: "The Church Has Recognized in the Way a Special Gift That the Holy Spirit Has Given Our Time" – Translated conclusion (Jan. 20, 2012, Zenit.org).

...May the Holy Virgin Mary with her maternal gaze assist you and may my Apostolic Blessing sustain you, which I extend to all the members of the Way. ...

Jan. 20 - Papal Address to Seminary of Diocese of Rome: "Faith Has Its Own Intellectual and Rational Dimension That Is Essential" – Translated conclusion (Jan. 20, 2012, Zenit.org).

... With the intercession of Agnes, Virgin and Martyr, and Mary Most Holy, Star of the Evangelization, may your commitment today contribute to the fruitfulness of your ministry....

Jan. 21 - Papal Address to Roman Rota: "Christian Maturity Leads One to an Ever Greater Love of the Law" – Translated conclusion (Jan. 23, 2012, Zenit.org).

In encouraging your precious work, which requires faithful, daily and committed effort, I entrust you to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, "Speculum iustitiae" (Mirror of Justice)

Jan. 22 - On Christian Unity: Unity "Demands Our Daily Commitment" – Translated conclusion of the Angelus address (Jan 23, 2012, Zenit.org)

...We entrust it now, with filial confidence, to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church.

Jan. 24 - Papal Message for Communications Day: "When Messages and Information Are Plentiful, Silence Becomes Essential" – Translated conclusion (Jan. 24, 2012, Zenit.org).

... To Mary, whose silence "listens to the Word and causes it to blossom" (Private Prayer at the Holy House, Loreto, 1 September 2007), I entrust all the work of evangelization which the Church undertakes through the means of social communication.

Jan. 25 - Pope's Message for the World Mission Day: "Faith Is a Gift That Is Given to Us to Be Shared" - Translated conclusion of "Called to Make the Word of Truth Shine" (Apostolic Letter Porta fidei,6 (Jan. 25, 2012, Zenit.org).

... May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and Star of Evangelization, accompany all missionaries of the Gospel.

Jan. 26 - Pope's Address to Three Regional Seminaries of Italy: "The World Awaits Saints: This Above All" – Translated conclusion (Jan. 27, 2012, Zenit.org).

For this I assure you of my prayer and I entrust you to the maternal guidance of Blessed Virgin Mary, imparting a special Apostolic Blessing from my heart.

Jan. 29 – On Authority as Service: God "Cannot Will Anything if Not Our Good" – Translated conclusion of the Angelus address (Jan. 30, 2012, Zenit.org)

... Let us call with confidence upon Mary Most Holy, that she guide our hearts to draw always

upon divine mercy, which liberates and frees our humanity, filling it with grace and benevolence, with the power of love.

Jan. 30 – Telegram for Death of Former Italian President, Scalfaro – Conclusion of condolence to Marianna Scalfaro for the death of her father, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro (Jan. 30, 2012, VIS).

... I raise fervent prayers for his soul, invoking divine goodness - by the intercession of the Virgin Mary for whom he had particular veneration - to grant him eternal peace....

Jan. 30 - Papal Message to Symposium on Clergy Sex Abuse: "Healing for Victims Must Be of Paramount Concern in the Christian Community" – Conclusion of the Pope's message sent by Benedict XVI's secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, to the rector of the Gregorian University. The Gregorian is hosting this week a Vatican-supported symposium on clergy sex abuse. (Feb. 6, 2012, Zenit.org)

... Commending the work of the Symposium to the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, he gladly imparts his Apostolic Blessing to all the participants, as a pledge of strength and peace in the Lord.

For Oct 21, 2012 - Pope's Message for World Mission Day: "Faith Is a Gift That Is Given to Us to Be Shared" – Translated conclusion (Jan. 25, 2012, Zenit.org).

... May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and Star of Evangelization, accompany all missionaries of the Gospel.